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DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Letter dated 11 November 1992 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I enclose a document setting out the position of the European Community on the question of large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing, which was recently debated in the Second Committee.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its enclosure could be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda item 78.

(Signed) D. H. A. HANNAY

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ANNEX

Large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing and its impact on the living marine resources of the world's oceans and seas

The European Community is generally satisfied with the recent implementation of the United Nations resolutions on drift-net fishing. The report of the Secretary-General (A/47/487) indicates that there has been a high level of implementation of them at least in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. The proper conservation and management of fisheries resources is a matter of importance to us all and one to which the Community attaches great significance.

The European Community would like to point out that United Nations General Assembly resolutions 44/225 and 45/197 have been implemented in the Community by regulation No. 345/92, which is of direct application. This regulation expressly prohibits fishing with drift-nets longer than 2.5 km and this applies in Community waters to all vessels and on the high seas to Community vessels. There is a limited exception to this for a restricted segment of the North-East Atlantic until the end of 1993 for certain vessels which have been fishing in that segment in the past.

The European Community would also like to refer to the submission by Canada mentioned in paragraph 48 of the Secretary-General's report, which expressed concerns that the Community would not implement the moratorium in the Baltic Sea and would delay its implementation in the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea until January 1994. As indicated above, there is a limited exception in the North-East Atlantic, but it is incorrect to say that the European Community would not implement the moratorium in the Baltic or delay its implementation in the Mediterranean. In the first place, there is a statement of the International Baltic Sea Fishery Commission, cited in paragraph 9 of the report, to the effect that there are no high seas in the Baltic and that this sea is, therefore, outside the scope of the resolutions. The Community has also proposed to that Commission that a moratorium on drift-nets longer than 2.5 km be introduced in the Baltic. The International Baltic Sea Fishery Commission will reconsider the issue at a meeting next year. There has been no delay in implementation of the moratorium in the Mediterranean Sea and the legal moratorium came into effect there in June 1992 after adoption of Community regulation No. 345/92 at the beginning of this year. Any violations of the moratorium shall of course be pursued in accordance with relevant procedures.